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What Does Indonesia's Bitcoin Ban Mean For the Future of the Cryptocurrency?

Not much.

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**Adi Renaldi**

Dec 6 2017, 2:01pm

VICE



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Bitcoin, the popular cryptocurrency, is the latest technology to face a ban in Indonesia after central bankers **warned** that it posed a threat to the stability of the national currency. The move, if enacted, would make Indonesia the second country in the region to ban Bitcoin after China **announced plans** to ban the currency in September. [MORE VICE](#)

But how, exactly, do you ban an anonymous currency that lives as ones and zeros online? Bank Indonesia is starting with the transaction services. The central bank wants to ban any tech company, e-commerce site, or payment system that accepts Bitcoin as a valid payment in Indonesia. That means you can't use your Bitcoin wallet to **buy a pizza** or **purchase airline tickets** in Indonesia.

The concern here is that Bitcoin could be used for money laundering or terrorism, according to central bank officials. They were also concerned that Bitcoin could destabilize the Rupiah—one of the **most-volatile** currencies in Southeast Asia.



of Bank Indonesia, told the industry news site Tech in Asia. "We will also encourage companies not to work with any parties facilitating virtual currency transactions."

But Bitcoin is more than a way to buy things in the real world. It's also an investment for traders and miners who don't mind the risk. The price of a single Bitcoin hit \$11,000 USD last week, an insane level of growth considering that the cryptocurrency was worth a single US dollar when it was launched in 2010. So will Indonesia's nascent Bitcoin scene continue mining and trading the currency regardless of the ban? Probably, said Dimaz Wijaya, the founder of the virtual currency trading site Kriptologi.

It's impossible for a government to block the entire Bitcoin ecosystem or prevent someone from mining the currency—a costly process involving servers performing complicated equations to "mine" for a set number of Bitcoins still out there in the wild, Dimaz explained. Even a block on payment systems or trading sites won't stop Bitcoin users from converting their digital currency to cash, he told VICE.

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"If the market is frozen, then people won't be able to conduct transactions," Dimaz said. "But this is only temporary. It's impossible to ban Bitcoin since it's autonomous and decentralized."



listed concerns—funding terrorism and money laundering. Anyone with an active Bitcoin wallet could just move their currencies out of the jurisdiction of the Indonesian central bank, Dimaz said.

“Simply put, users can easily move their transactions abroad using other currencies, for example US dollars,” Dimaz said.

That's exactly what happened in China. The country banned the use of Bitcoin in early November, triggering **a short-term dip** before the currency rebounded as users found work-arounds to the government's ban. Chinese money continued to flow into cryptocurrency investment projects and the market shifted to peer-to-peer transactions instead of big, open fundraising efforts for other startups, **according** to reports at the time.

Still, the ban has already forced two trading sites to shut their doors. Toko Bitcoin and Bitbayar shut down in early November, with Bitbayar canceling contracts with more than 1,600 merchants who were willing to accept Bitcoin as a valid form of payment.

So what about the third concern of Bank Indonesia regulators, that cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin could destabilize the Rupiah? It's unlikely because Bitcoin was never really all that popular here anyway. According to some estimates, there were **about 500,000 Bitcoin users** in Indonesia. Today, there are **more than \$10 million USD** in Bitcoin transactions occurring in the country every day.

But even that volume only accounts for some 4 percent of total global transactions, explained Oscar Darmawan, the CEO of Bitcoin Indonesia, in an interview with VICE. Oscar expects this figure to rise, not fall, after the ban, in a large part because of Bitcoin's global nature. Basically, if the digital currency is still valuable abroad, then it's still valuable here.



"Asset such as Bitcoin or gold are free of boundaries."

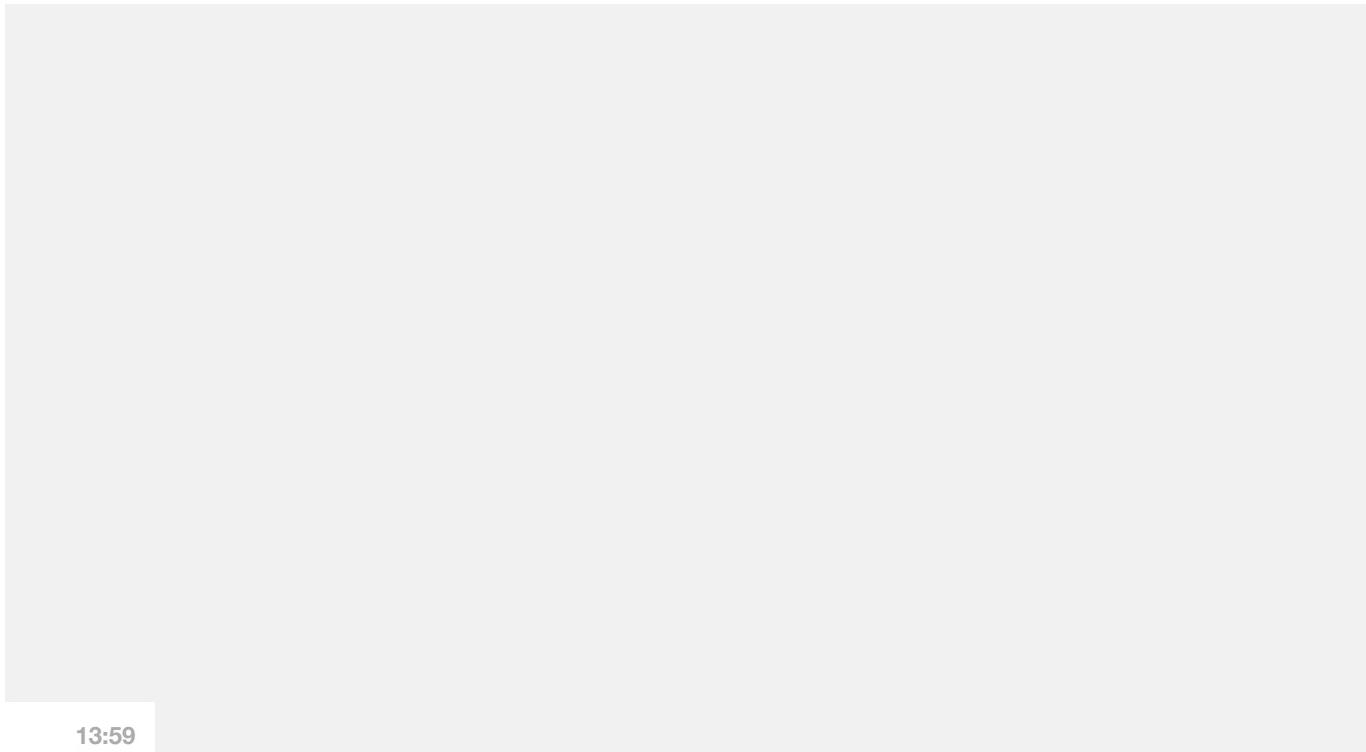


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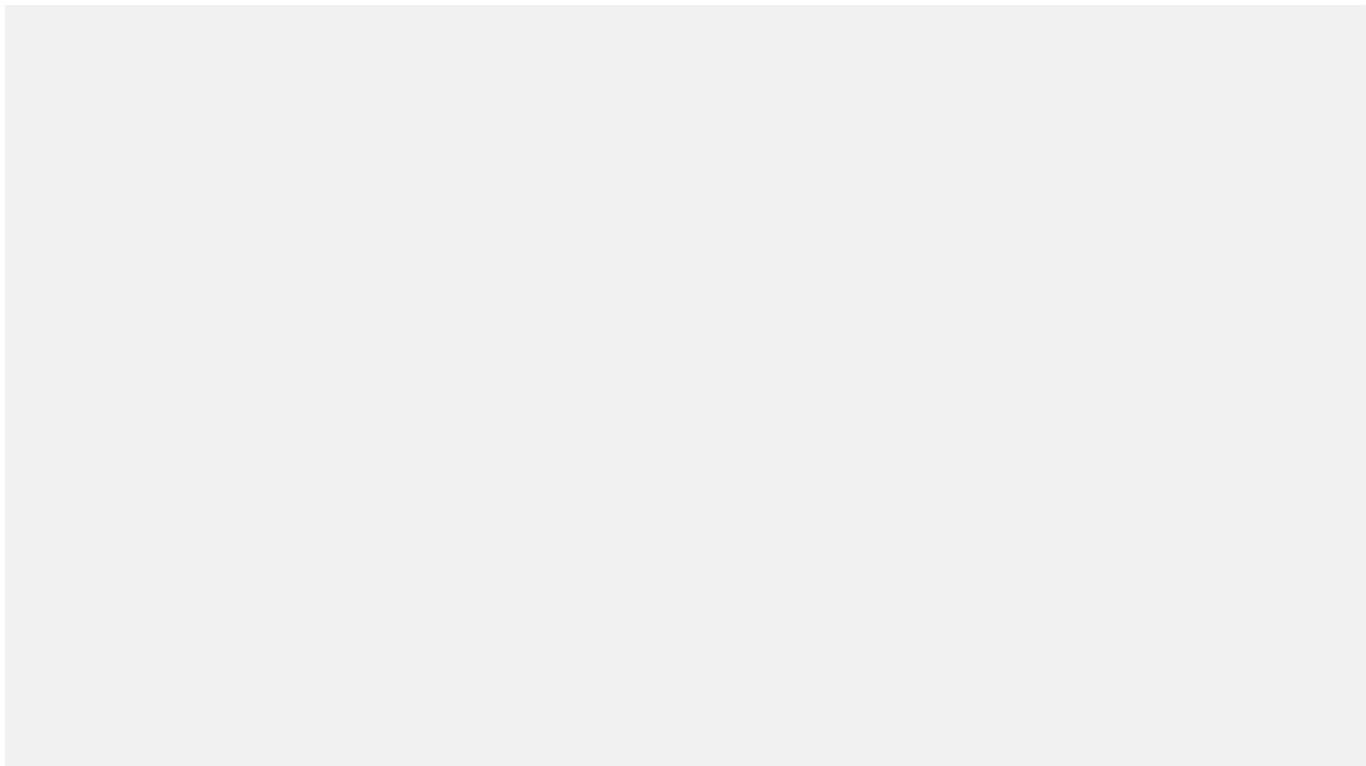
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Joe Zadeh

Feb 26 2018, 11:35am



This article originally appeared on Noisey UK.

Sick of golden era heads telling you that you can't enjoy the new [Rich Gang track](#) without understanding how The Chronic popularized G-funk? Well, some dude on internet radio site 8tracks.com—who goes under the sad and ambitious name of MCAforPresident—has spent a serious amount of time tracing his personal journey through the genre for public enjoyment, all the way from 1988 to the year 2000.

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into the heart of gangsta rap's commercial explosion, past the dawn of the golden age and the dominance of old school—and then beyond; into the state of hip hop as it approached the millenium. So basically: NWA, A Tribe Called Quest, Three Times Dope, Beastie Boys, Slick Rick, Biggie, Mos Def, Jay Z, Q-Tip, Big L, Eminem, Outkast, east coast, west coast, underground and everything over, under and in between.

Whether you're a total head looking to reminisce or a young basic looking to educate; this could well be worth a few afternoons. Props to MCAforPresident, and you can listen [here](#).

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DOLLS

There's a Psychological Reason Dolls Are So Spooky

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DOLLS

There's a Psychological Reason Dolls Are So Spooky

They're in a gray area between person and thing.

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Shayla Love

Feb 25 2018, 5:00pm



This article originally appeared on Tonic.

The first doll-centric horror plot I saw was an episode of the Twilight Zone where “Talky Tina,” a girl doll with bow-tied pigtails, terrorizes and murders its owner’s stepfather. I remember eyeing my own toys suspiciously afterwards, and feeling grateful I had mostly bears, rather than porcelain imitations of little children.

Countless movies and TV shows have capitalized on a similar premise: Dolls are creepy AF. The more human they look—with moving glass eyes, realistic hair, or a slight blush on the cheek—the more they weird us out.

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But why do we find them so creepy? According to Thalia Wheatley, a cognitive neuroscientist at Dartmouth University, it’s related to the way our brains detect and pay attention to faces. She’s been using our responses to dolls to investigate a simple skill we all have, but a lingering mystery in neuroscience: How exactly do we tell a *who* from a *what*? And what can a doll’s creepiness tell us about that process?

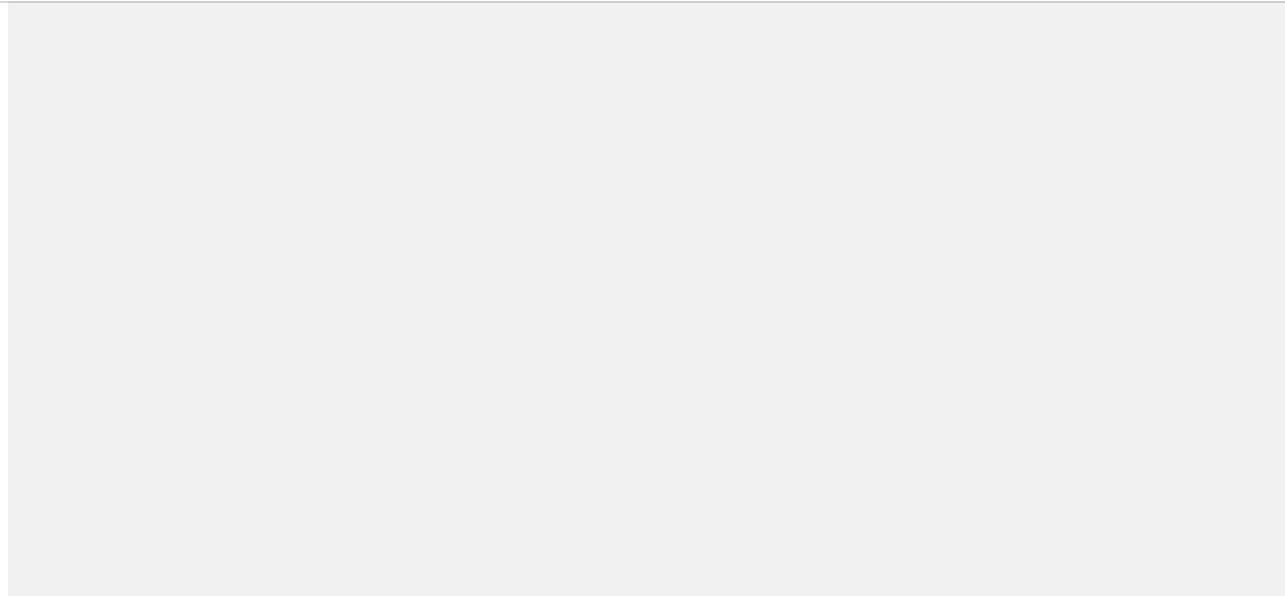


pay more attention to faces than to faces whose features have been scrambled. It's also been **established** that the brain shows activity in **specific regions** to any face in just **170 milliseconds**, so we notice them *really* fast. In this rapid face recognition, our brains are not very picky. Two circles and a curve will elicit the same face response as a human's face, and this is why we sometimes see faces in inanimate objects, like power outlets, or a colon and a parenthesis :) .

But if that were as far as our facial recognition capabilities went, we'd walk around in the world pretty confused. "We must be able to discriminate faces worthy of our thoughts, feelings, and actions from false alarms that are not actually faces," Wheatley wrote **in a recent paper**. "Otherwise we might regard clouds, cars, or houses as objects with a mental life." The way our brains know the difference between a who and a what lies in our ability not only to see faces, but to know whether a face has a mind attached to it. Enter the dolls.

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In 2010, Wheatley showed Dartmouth students a series of images morphing from a doll to a human baby, with many in-betweens. "We knew that one endpoint was a doll, and the other endpoint was a human being," she says. "The question was whether there'd be any consistency in when people determined it slipped from one to the other."



[Loosier & Wheatley \(2010\). Psych Science.](#) Featured in "News of the Week", Science, 331,19.

What they found was that people are very specific about where that spot was. It wasn't at the halfway point; our standards for humanness are higher. People felt the image was alive at around 65 to 67 percent human. "The same tipping point occurred whether people were asked if the face 'had a mind', 'could form a plan,' or was 'able to experience pain,' indicating that recognizing life in a face is tantamount to recognizing the capacity for a mental life," Wheatley says. When Wheatley asked certain participants why they felt that way, one person said that's when the doll "started to look back at me."

In a [follow-up study](#), Wheatley used EEG to measure the brain responses of people looking at doll faces, human faces, and the face of a clock. She found that the way the brain perceives faces has two stages. The first we already knew: that a face is rapidly detected. But there's another, longer process where our brains try to determine if a face has a mind. If the brain decides that face does, your attention stays with the face. If you deem something not to have a mind, then your attention wanes.

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survival to detect possible faces very quickly," she says. But the second stage moves beyond survival. "You're basically looking to see whether this person has a mind you can connect with. Is somebody home?"

And that's where the creepiness can come in. With dolls, or other human-like objects that do a better job at mimicking what real faces look like, your brain is searching for a mind and not finding one. But it's getting a lot of the same cues (eyes, mouth, expressions) that it would receive in faces with minds. "There are these signals that are telling our brain this thing is alive," she says. "But we know it's not alive. And that juxtaposition is really creepy."

This is called by some researchers the uncanny valley, or a "dip in emotional response that happens when we encounter an entity that is almost, but not quite, human," Stephanie Lay, a psychologist who studies the uncanny valley, wrote in [**The Conversation**](#). The uncanny valley



into our societies.

Lay's **research** has shown we feel uncomfortable when we see expressions on dolls, avatars, or robots that we would never encounter in nature. "The things that I found triggered that sense of unease most strongly, were those faces where you've got an expression in the mouth and the eyes that were incongruent. They didn't tie up together," she says. "The creepiest ones were when you have a happy smiling mouth, and eyes that are angry or frightened."

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Angela Tinwell, a senior lecturer at the School of Games at the University of Bolton, started to study the uncanny valley after seeing her students struggle to make three-dimensional virtual characters in video games. Similar to Lay and Wheatley's work, she's found that incongruences in eyes, facial expressions, or body language can lead to avatars looking eerie, instead of human like.

Wheatley says it's still an open question as to when all these processes develop. Little kids don't seem to be as creeped out by dolls as adults are, and this could be because they're not yet considering that other people and objects could have minds. **Studies on the effect** of the uncanny valley on children might reveal more about what age that kicks in, one from last year finding it in children ages nine and up, but not younger.

But the end goal isn't only to make avatars or robots that don't make us squirm. Understanding more about the detection of faces and minds could reveal some nuances in the way we see each other too. After Wheatley's work was published, Jay Van Bavel, a social neuroscientist at NYU used similar doll-to-people morphing, to ask how social factors could influence mind detection.

He's been finding that social alliances can impact how easily you see a mind. People will be **quicker to see a mind** in the face of someone in their group, whatever that group may be. For example, in the 2015 Super Bowl his lab found that football fans didn't require as much "humanness" to see a mind in their



His lab is currently exploring how this effect could cause people to treat others in everyday life. In medical treatment, for example, they're investigating how practitioners could have a harder time detecting expressions of pain in the faces of African American men to try and explain a contributing factor in the racial disparities of pain management.

"This might have implications for the dehumanization of out group members," Van Bavel tells me. "Throughout history, people have treated certain groups as less than human. In most cases of genocide, from Nazi Germany to Rwanda, the minority group was compared to vermin (e.g., rats or cockroaches). By seeing



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I ask Tinwell if she thinks the uncanny valley will ever go away, as our dolls, video games, and robots get more realistic. And could that affect the way we see minds in people too? She thinks that even though face and mind representations will get better, our brains will only become more discerning as viewers. "I think we'll always stay one step ahead of virtual technology and dolls and animation," she says.

Lay agrees, but says that while our brains will never evolve to think that robots have minds, we will probably grow to think of them as less creepy. As a researcher studying the uncanny, she's found her threshold for creepiness has changed. "We'll become habituated," she says.

And what about dolls? In a potential future with human-like robot concierges or assistants, will there stop being scary movies made about dolls? Probably not, Lay says, because they still hover in a strange place in the boundary between human and non-human.

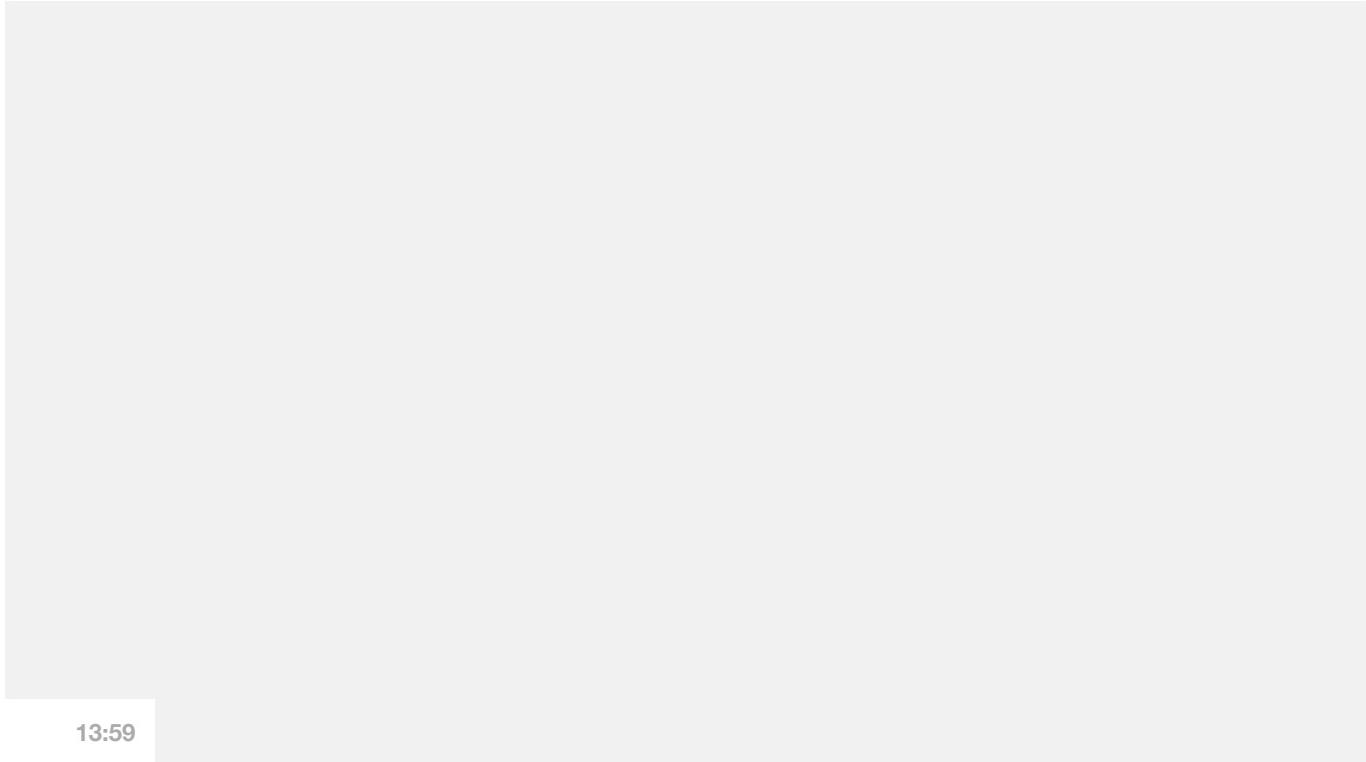
"I think it's only embodied androids where we'll become more tolerant," she says. "The qualities that dolls have are subtly different because they're static representations of human babies. I think there is something inherently creepy about this stillness."

Also, we might enjoy it—just a little. Wheatley thinks that since dolls live so closely to the boundary, it can be scary, but in a way that's fun; why horror movies are exciting but don't cause us any lasting distress. "We like suspending that disbelief at times," she says. "When it's safe to do so. It's thrilling to see Chuckie the clown, to let our brain play with that ambiguity. But if there was actually a clown doll that walked into your house, it would be absolutely terrifying. It wouldn't be fun anymore."



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